

*Editor's Note: This is the third in a series of three essays by Keith DeGreen on the general topic of America and Democratic Capitalism. © 2023 DeGreenCo LLC*

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# **Democratic Capitalism: Profit or Plunder?**

**By Keith DeGreen, J.D., CFP®**

## **Those Greedy Bastards!**

These days, the prevailing progressive-media view is that our American democracy is hopelessly flawed.

For example, today's talking heads assert that the deep anger of millions of Americans about the direction of our country is proof that American democracy is not working -- that there is a real risk the nation will surrender to the populist (translation totalitarian) ravings of – God forbid – Donald Trump or other suspicious MAGA/Republican/Conservative types.

Also, the prevailing view among the liberal elite ("PE" for short) – so often taught in schools these days -- is that the history of capitalism is nothing more than a history of abuse and exploitation so replete with abuses that our economic system must be treated with the utmost suspicion and contempt.

Why, they say, those dirty capitalists are just a bunch of greedy bastards who want to exploit Black people, and women, and transexuals, and your grandma and your dog – especially if your dog is a transexual!

These alleged shortcomings are proof in the minds of the PE that we would all be a lot better off if...well...if things were a bit more

controlled by enlightened progressives. That is, by those in elected and appointed positions who believe they must rule *around* the people for whom they hold contempt, in accordance with their perceived Divine Right of Kings (something we fought a revolution to eliminate from our shores).

Yes! Government by the enlightened! That would solve everything!

So, as they say in Minnesota, You betcha! Power to the people! Well, power to certain people anyway.

In their words (although they sometimes hedge their words) and deeds (that they increasingly do not hedge)– as they implement by fiat their domestic and foreign policies – the PE demonstrate their belief that democratic capitalism is no better – and perhaps worse -- than other demonstrably-inferior political and economic systems around the world.

### ***Really?***

A recurring theme of America's PE pseudo-intelligentsia is that America's system of democratic capitalism is nothing special. A system that deserves only moral parity with other competing systems. Just another system, no better – and maybe even worse -- than the rest.

So, let us make our case that Democratic Capitalism not only works, but works exceptionally well. That it not only continues to enrich millions of people here in the U.S., but also billions of people around the globe.

PE spin doctors point to various periods of American history as proof that we are a flawed society. And they usually get it wrong!

In response to their revisionist history, we will begin by discussing today's documented attempts to monopolize thought and speech by big tech, by the media and by our own government.

Next we will discuss a period of American history known as the Gilded Age -- that period of American history from about 1870 to about 1900. We will examine this period because today's PE c it as an example of how, under capitalism, the rich then – as now, they claim – got richer at everyone else's expense. They are wrong, and we will prove it.

We will also discuss America's original sin -- slavery – because, again, the left claims that our experience discredits our entire system. Finally, we will address just two of the serious threats faced by American Democratic Capitalism today: the cynical PE agenda regarding our southern border, and their weaponization – their abuse -- of climate science.

### **The Monopolization of Ideas**

As he left office, President Eisenhower warned of a military industrial complex. Today we face a Washington-Media-Big-Tech complex that routinely threatens our freedoms.

In a thoughtful 120-page opinion, on July 4, 2023, Federal Court Judge Terry Doughty issued a preliminary injunction that bars several federal departments and agencies from various interactions with social media companies. Incredibly – but predictably -- the Biden Administration has appealed the decision.

Remarkably, the court found myriad instances where government officials not only communicated with social media outlets, but threatened heightened enforcement action if those outlets did not block certain dissenting views – many by respected scientists and by other thoughtful commentators. That these liberal-leaning outlets were already inclined to suppress dissent only added to the

efficacy of the government-tech conspiracy to suppress free speech.

Most Americans, I believe, are troubled not as much by Big-Tech's profits, but by its ability – indeed, its desire – to suppress dissenting views, in cooperation with the media and at the urging of our own government – the very government that, under our Constitution, intended to protect free speech.

As an aside, let me offer this advice to our big tech/government/media censors: If you want to defeat a bad idea, let it see the light of day. Instead of it being whispered from the shadows, let it be shouted from the rooftops.

Let all non-violent ideas compete in the ultimate marketplace – the marketplace of people's minds. Great concepts will rise to the top. Foolish ideas will sink to the bottom.

Yes, many ideas do need to be heard. For example:

That crazy allegation by those right-wing whackos that the 2016 Russia Hoax was not about Trump conspiring with Russia, but about Hillary Clinton, the Democrats and our own government deflecting attention from the classified server Hillary kept in her closet. Crazy, Huh?

Or the subversive ideas that maybe COVID did, in fact, originate in a Wuhan Lab, or that younger people were not at mortal risk from COVID, and that vaccines might actually be harmful to them.

Or – just one more -- the ridiculous assertion that the government and Twitter colluded to exclude Donald Trump and his supporters from that app.

Crazy, Huh?

Here is the crucial point: when you censor dissenting views you *are not judging the idea you censor*. No, *you are judging the people*

*who may see or hear that idea.* You are expressing your contempt for those people -- contempt for the ability of Americans to sort through the noise and make their own decisions.

In short, you are demonstrating your disrespect for an essential cornerstone of our democracy – *the common sense of the American people!*

## **The Gilded Age and the Robber Barons**

Just how horrible was the so-called “Gilded Age” (about 1865-1900) for Americans?

There is no doubt that some of the great industrialists and financiers of the day – the so-called Robber Barons such as J.P. Morgan, Vanderbilt, Gould, Carnegie, and others – amassed huge fortunes. They built enterprises – entire industries -- that launched the U.S. as the world’s preeminent economic power.

They also pulled off breathtaking acts of market manipulation and political influence – many of which were entirely legal at the time (and some of which were not).

A quick side-bar story:

There is also no doubt that it was a particularly profitable time to be an elected official, especially if you worked in, say, Albany, New York.

There, legislators would sometimes vote *against*, say, the proposed project of a specific railroad – but only *after* they had sold its stock short. After they voted to deny the project, the railroad’s stock price tanked and these short sellers profited.

Those same legislators would then collect their short-selling profits and *repurchase* the railroad’s stock at a deep discount.

They would then return to the legislature and vote to *approve* that same railroad's proposed project. This of course, caused its stock to skyrocket in value!

Nice work if you can find it!

So, absolutely, there were abuses during the so-called Gilded Age. There were also labor abuses, including violence against striking workers and dangerous working conditions.

As another aside, ethical lapses are certainly alive and well in our modern age. It was back in 1988, when I ran for the U.S. Senate as Arizona's Republican Candidate. My opponent was an incumbent who sat on the committee that determined the path of the largest public-works irrigation project ever – the Arizona Canal. After he determined the path of the canal in committee, he used a partnership to buy up land in the path of the canal.

After buying the land, his partnership then flipped it to the government at an inflated price.

Again, nice work if you can get it.

Unfortunately, we did not get the details out in time to save my ill-fated campaign.

But 1988 may seem like ancient history to younger readers. Rest assured, questionable behavior is alive and well today among our political elite.

For example, perhaps you would like to start an international foundation while you are a former President and while your wife is Secretary of State. You then go 'round the world collecting massive speaking fees and "donations" from governments to your foundation – all perfectly legal.

Or, perhaps your dad is, say – I just making this up, of course -- the Vice President of the United States. Suddenly, in the eyes of shady companies and governments, *you* become such an expert on everything that they pay you millions of dollars for your expertise.

Absolutely inspired, isn't it?

To be fair: such behavior is not the exclusive domain of Democrats in Washington. For example, recently Ohio's state Republican Speaker of the House was indicted in connection with a \$60M pay-to-play scheme. Who says there's not big money in state politics!

But back to those Robber Barons. As I will demonstrate in a moment, the Gilded Age was in fact a time of tremendous advances in income and standards of living across a broad spectrum of America. Despite the Progressive narrative, the period was emphatically not about how only a handful of people made fortunes while everyone else suffered.

Let us set the historical record straight.

Here I draw heavily from an excellent opinion piece recently published in *The Wall Street Journal*. Phil Gramm and Amity Shlaes wrote it. Ms. Schlaes is the author of "The Great Society and "The Forgotten Man."

Mr. Gramm is no slouch either. He is a respected economist and a former chairperson of the U.S. Senate Banking Committee. Senator Gramm is also co-author of an excellent book, *The Myth of American Inequality*. I recommend it.

Remember – and this is important: *alleged income inequality, alleged industrial and labor abuse, and other real or imagined injustices comprise the sand upon which the progressive-socialist church is built.*

It is their claim that today, as during the late 1800s, “the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer.”

But here is what Senator Gramm and Ms. Schlaes had to say about what the impact of the Robber Barons really was during the so-called Gilded Age:

In fact, they wrote:

“Between 1870 and 1900, America’s inflation-adjusted gross national product expanded by an unprecedented 233%. Though the population nearly doubled, real per capita GNP surged by 90%.

“Real wages of nonfarm employees grew by 53%, and life’s staples, such as food, clothing, and shelter, became more plentiful and much cheaper.

“Food prices plummeted by 174% and the cost of textiles, fuel and home furnishings fell by 70%, 65% and 70%, respectively. The illiteracy rate fell by 46% and life expectancy rose 12.5%. Infant mortality declined by 17%.

“As American capitalism blossomed, some got rich. In 1892 there were 4,050 millionaires, with less than 20% having inherited their wealth.

“The rest *created* their wealth and, in the process, reduced poverty, expanded general societal prosperity, and made it possible for millions of immigrants looking for opportunity and freedom to find both.

“That mattered little to progressives, who were so obsessed by the 4,050 millionaires that they turned a blind eye to the 66 million Americans whose economic well-being improved faster than any people who had ever lived on earth. *Ever!*”



“Had the Gilded Age suffered from monopolistic exploitation,” they wrote, “as critics claim, output would have fallen, and prices would have risen in the monopolized industries.

“But in a 1985 study, economist Thomas DiLorenzo tested that hypothesis for steel, petroleum, railroads and other industries accused of being monopolistic during the debate on the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890.

“He found that output in those industries actually increased by an average of 175% from 1880-90—seven times the growth rate of real GNP. On average, prices in the ostensibly monopolized industries fell three times as fast as the consumer price index.

“This myth of the Gilded Age in turn produced Progressive Era regulations that proved to be an impediment to competition, as regulation became an ‘instrument of cartelization,’ producing higher prices, poorer services, and less innovation.

“In fact, by the 1970s the negative effect of these regulations was so obvious that even liberal Sen. Ted Kennedy and President Jimmy Carter led the deregulation of airlines, trucking, railroads, energy, and communications.

“The benefits of overturning excess Progressive Era regulations included more competition, greater efficiency, more innovation and stronger growth, setting the foundations of contemporary American competitiveness and prosperity.”

“But” the authors continued, “proving that no bad idea ever dies, progressivism has been reborn with outcries against billionaires and the tech industry as the new monopolistic ‘trust’ that must be ‘busted’ and regulated.

“Robert Reich, who served as President Clinton’s labor secretary, has opined that ‘like the robber barons of the first Gilded Age, those

of the second’—the tech giants—'have amassed fortunes because of their monopolies.’

“Yet on both claims, the case for 21st-century progressivism is even weaker than it was in the Gilded Age.

“Spewing envy at the Fortune 400 billionaires—whose *combined after-tax incomes would not have funded federal, state, and local government in 2020 for a week*—progressives denounce such people as Bill Gates, who has created hundreds of thousands of jobs and enriched the lives of billions.

“Today our retirement funds own far more of Microsoft than he does.

“Meanwhile, today’s tech production and prices show no signs of the modern tech industry being monopolized. In fact, many of their products are free, and the cost of search and text advertising that underwrites much of their revenues has fallen by more than 50% in the last decade.

“Progressive regulation for 80 years stifled competition, lowered efficiency and drove up prices.”

Senator Gramm and Ms. Shaeles ask, “Is this an experiment we want to repeat?”

They continued in their editorial, “Today’s progressive rant that income inequality is an existential threat is both unpersuasive and untrue. If we counted all transfer payments such as food stamps and refundable tax credits as income to their recipients and taxes paid as income lost to taxpayers—something the U.S. Census Bureau doesn’t do—we’d find that income inequality is lower today than it was in 1947.

“At its root, progressivism is based on a myth and fueled by envy—the same caustic force that has destroyed prosperity and endangered freedom from the time of the ancient Greeks.”

So wrote, Ms. Shlaes and Senator Gramm.

I return to my earlier statement. I am not as concerned with how much money tech companies and their founders make – God Bless ‘em, this is America – as I am concerned with their attempted monopoly on thought.

However, as with so many abuses before, since, and to come, tech’s attempts at thought-monopoly, I am confident, will be addressed, as so many other abuses have been overcome, through the dynamic force of markets (competition) and through democratic and legal processes.

Competition rules. Not one of the companies that were part of the original Dow Jones Industrial Average Index are part of that index today. Of the original five hundred companies in the S&P 500 Index, only eighty-six remain.

Also consider our political and legal progress: since the days of those so-called Robber Barons, America has enacted and refined, and our courts have upheld – just for example – meaningful anti-trust laws, meaningful investor-protection laws, the creation of our Social Security system, tax-deferred retirement plans, minimum wage and minimum age standards, occupational health and safety standards, product and food safety standards, equal employment legislation, and much, much more.

Competition, democracy, and the rule of law: America’s remarkably effective formula for ordered liberty.

## **The Original Sin -- Slavery**

Our detractors also claim that the concept of America is a ruse because our nation was born of an original sin – slavery.

However, when they met in Philadelphia, our Founding Fathers knew that the question before them was not whether slavery would endure a while longer across the southern states. Many of the founders expressed hope that the institution would die naturally because it was both cruel and inefficient. The question before them was not whether some states would continue to allow slavery. The question was whether we would have a *United* States at all.

The miracle of America is not that our more perfect union was created by perfect men.

No! The miracle of America is that our more perfect union was created by imperfect men.

Men, who through our founding documents, nevertheless laid the foundation for the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment that abolished slavery, the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment that gave citizenship to all people born in the United States, the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment that gave Black Americans the right to vote; and – Oh, incidentally – the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment that gave women the right to vote!

Incidentally, regarding the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments, those Amendments were enacted during the Civil War while about 180,000 freed Black men were serving in the Union Army. Of the more than 320,000 Union troops who died in the Civil war, about 40,000 of them were black.

But those Constitutional Amendments were vehemently – and sometimes violently -- opposed by the few Democrats who had not left Congress to join the Confederacy.

We have the Republican super-majorities of the 37<sup>th</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup> Congresses to thank for those Amendments, and especially three of their congressional leaders: Thaddeus Stevens, William Pitt Fessenden, and Ben Wade.

There is an excellent book on what those men went through to pass those Amendments: the book is *Congress at War* by Fergus Bordewich<sup>1</sup>. I recommend it!

Yes, to the eternal shame of the Supreme Court, it took far too many years for us to enforce those guarantees. Jim Crow Laws enacted after the Civil War by Southern Democrats – laws that the high Court refused to overturn -- established outrageous barriers and deprived Black Americans of their rights for almost one hundred additional years.

Finally, President Truman (a Democrat) ordered the integration of the military in 1948. Then in 1954 the Supreme Court eliminated the doctrine of “separate but equal” in education. Finally, Congress passed a series of civil rights laws in the 1960s – almost one hundred years after the passage of those Amendments!

Yes, democracy can be painfully slow. But it *does* work.

*Democratic Capitalism* ensures that it can work! It also ensures that when we muster the will, we have the resources to make it work.

But – you guessed it -- the PE crowd continues its tirade that Black, Brown and other Americans that they remain victims of an inherently unfair system.

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<sup>1</sup> *Congress at War*, by Fergus Bordewich, Knopf Publishing 2022.

In fact, too many Americans *are* deprived of opportunity today – as victims of an unfair educational system – promoted and protected by progressive politicians and the unions that own them.

The lack of K-12 educational opportunity is the greatest civil rights issue of our age. The solution is *school choice*.

I continue to address this critical issue on our podcasts.

Unfortunately -- as since its founding – our incredible system of democratic capitalism remains under assault – not just from foreign adversaries, but from within as well.

Let us explore just two examples of the serious internal threats we face:

## **The Border**

Who really holds the moral high ground when it comes to protecting our southern border?

*(In a recent podcast I addressed what I called the “South Side” of this issue – the economics of remittances, and the pathetic job so many Latin American countries do to provide democratic capitalism for their own people. If you have not done so already, I invite you to join me for that podcast at [degreen.com](http://degreen.com).)*

The PE claim the moral high ground on this issue by saying, “Oh, watch those poor migrants making the hazardous trip to the U.S. to have a better life! How can we turn them away?”

“Where is our compassion?,” they ask.

Here is our compassion: with the 100,000 Americans who died last year, and the 120,000 Americans who will die this year from the horrible drugs that are flowing across our southern border.

The left’s position in favor of a porous border is not compassion at all! In fact, it reflects *the lowest level of morality possible*.

It trades American lives for political gain.

What the PE are really saying is this: “We can’t get enough actual U.S. citizens to vote for our big-government redistributionist policies, so we’ll just import millions of new voters, give them tons of government benefits – paid for by you – and find ways to allow those people to vote – for us!

Watch the videos of those who flood across our border. Typically, they are young, strong, healthy people. Very few of them are carrying drugs, and we are not accusing them of being drug dealers.

Yet, along with those people, massive amounts of drugs pour across our open border -- brought by genuine – often viscous -- cartel criminals.

Criminals and drugs that take American lives!

More statistics: 14,000 pounds of fentanyl were seized at the border this past fiscal year. And this is only the quantity we intercepted. Deadly illegal drugs are pouring across our border.

According to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), two milligrams of fentanyl is a lethal dose in most people. That works out to 227,000 potential deaths *per pound* of fentanyl.

What does this mean for America? What does this mean for your family and friends?

Perspective: As did some three million Americans, I served in Vietnam. I was with the Marines. The United States had troops in Vietnam for 20 years. 58,000 Americans died in that war.

58,000 deaths over 20 years. Terrible, but last year alone, more than 100,000 Americans – mostly young people – died from drug overdoses right here in the United States – usually from drugs laced with fentanyl and other deadly synthetic substances.

Again, this year? We expect to lose another 120,000 young Americans to illegal drugs that pour across our southern border.

Yes, in 2023 alone we will lose *twice* as the number of Americans to illegal drugs – from our porous border -- than died during the entire Vietnam War. Incidentally, this equals about three times the number of Americans who died in the Korean War!

Those of us old enough certainly remember the Vietnam War protests.

Where are the protests from the left over these drug deaths today? Against the flood of illegal drugs and violent criminals pouring across our border? Where is the outrage at the American lives lost here at home every day?

What motivation could the administration and the PE have to allow this travesty?

Incredibly, one such motive is obvious: *To win future elections as they find more ways to allow illegals<sup>2</sup> to vote here in the U.S.*

In conjunction with their open-border policies, the left's failure to protect every lawful vote – their push to expand ballot access to everyone – including to non-citizens -- is *not* about civil rights.

Again, they disingenuously claim the high ground. Equal rights, they scream! Justice! Equality! Fairness!

It is not about justice. It is not about equality. It is not about fairness.

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<sup>2</sup> I will not sugarcoat my vocabulary here. These people are not “undocumented workers”, the great majority of them do not qualify for “political asylum”. Yes, they may be seeking a better life, and the children they bring with them are cute, and we care about them. But adults who cross unlawfully are criminals. They violated our law the moment they set foot in the United States without first obtaining permission through our lawful immigration process. Use of the term “illegals” is arguably charitable when compared to the more accurate term, “criminals.” Someone who crosses our border unlawfully is committing a continuous crime every day they remain in the United States.



It is about trading American lives for political power.

Is *that* the moral high ground??

How utterly cynical must you be to sacrifice more than 100,000 Americans every year upon the alter of your political ambitions? How absolutely, unspeakably horrible!

Oh, I know... the true cynic will argue that drug users are complicit in their own demise. But we know that most fentanyl fatalities occur among young people.

Here is a news bulletin: young people do dumb things. It is sort of their job.

That is why it is our job – even as we try to hammer some common sense into our kids -- not just as Republicans but as Americans, and as parents and grandparents, to hold the President and the PE strictly accountable for failing to protect our border, for failing to protect our young people, and for so cynically trading American lives for future votes.

Their body count continues to climb.

That is why we must shout from the rooftops:

We will never – never – trade the lives of our children for votes!

And that *is* the moral high ground.

## **The Weaponization of Climate Change**

There here is another threat that threatens the fabric of Democratic Capitalism. In fact, it smacks of the special- interest excesses that progressives claim they hate.

It is a threat that has weaponized and misrepresented a legitimate but very complex science for the purpose of promoting a political agenda that is unrelated to science itself.

It is a threat that sees our own government create massive winners and losers in our economy in pursuit of an unproven causal relationship, a pursuit that commands each of us to become increasingly dependent on government-regulated power supplies, government-subsidized products, and government-mandated behavior.

It is the weaponization of climate change.

Raise your hand if you want to ruin our planet! Hmmm.

No takers? Good.

Back in 2007 during my first failed retirement, after I sold my first company, I bought a boat – a beautiful Nordhavn 55 full-displacement trawler/yacht. (Incidentally, the convention is that boats over fifty feet are supposed to be called either ships or yachts).

With a small crew, I piloted the Global Adventure – that was her name -- across the Pacific Ocean as far as Thailand. We even broadcast a weekly radio from the middle of the Ocean! It was a blast!

Let me assure you: a 55-foot full displacement trawler may look very impressive when it is sitting at the dock. But put it out in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, and it is an ant on an elephant's behind!

Out there, alone, away from the works of man, I witnessed the absolute power and majesty of pure nature. And yes, it was not always pleasant. Sometimes it was downright scary.

Unfortunately, as we approached the coast of, for example, the Philippines, I was sickened by the site of man-made debris – junk – floating out as far as 50 miles from shore. Along the Chinese coast and Vietnamese coasts, it was at least as bad.

Yes, we *are* making a mess of the place, and yes, we need to clean up our act. But to allege that our pathetic human activities have the outsized consequence that the climate crazies claim is just nonsense.

That is not just me talking. Courageous, eminent scientists are also – finally -- speaking out. In 2021 alone, the U.S. economy spent a record \$755B on clean energy. And now, with the incredibly misnamed Inflation Reduction Act that the Democrats passed before they lost the House in 2022, trillions more will be allocated to favored companies and industries.

Consultancy firm McKinsey says total global spending by governments, businesses and individuals on energy and land-use systems will need to rise by an additional \$3.5T to \$9.2T a year – that is *every* year -- if we are to have any chance of getting to net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

That is a massive increase on today's level of investment and is equivalent to half of global corporate profits, a quarter of world tax revenue and 7% of household spending.

The report also states: ““The net-zero transition will amount to a massive economic transformation.”

*Ya Think?*

Yet, there is no discernable evidence that specific current expenditures will have a significant impact on carbon emissions – but they are certainly making a lot of favored people rich – at your expense, of course.

In fact, some scientists argue that planting a few billion trees could have the same or greater effect of reducing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere than many of the expensive and mandatory lifestyle changes we are now being compelled to make.

A recent study published in the journal *Science* found that Earth's ecosystems could support an additional 2.2 billion acres of forests, 25 percent more forested area than we have now. By planting more than a half trillion trees, the authors say, we could capture about 205 gigatons of carbon (a gigaton is one billion metric tons), reducing atmospheric carbon by about 25 percent. That is enough to negate about 20 years of human-produced carbon emissions at the current rate, or about half of all carbon emitted by humans since 1960.

That would buy the green energy industry time to develop much more efficient and cost-effective energy-saving technology.

But God forbid we should embrace the simplest solution. No! Instead, the climate crazies in power have taken matters to the point of absurdity. For example, California is prohibiting the installation of gas stoves in new homes. Instead, your cooking will depend on the reliability of the notoriously unreliable – and expensive – California power grid.

This is just nonsense!

Again: none of us want to harm our wonderful planet.

However, the left has inflated legitimate climate concerns to advance a socialist model of governance where – once again – the well-connected will profit while the political elite (the PE) exert even more influence over our lives.

Their manipulation of data – across major institutions – and their suppression of responsible dissenting views is – if not lawfully criminal, at the very least, morally abhorrent.

Here is what we know is happening:

An entire generation has now been indoctrinated – not educated, indoctrinated -- and now incorrectly believes that a climate

Armageddon is inevitable unless humankind relinquishes individual freedom to the dictates of the state – a state claiming that only its edicts and our compliance can save the planet.

Their tool? Climate models intended not to *inform*, but to *persuade*.

For years there have been detailed climate models that attempt to measure the impact of various social, economic, and political systems on the planet. Fair enough.

Not surprisingly, the model most supported by most so-called climate science institutions – is a socialist model that favors wealth equality among nations, at the expense of the two hallmarks of capitalism: individual initiative and reward.

Many previously reputable national and international science organizations have been coopted by people who selectively use, present, or even invent data to promote their political agenda.

There is another wonderful, and recent, book out there. Its title: *Unsettled*<sup>3</sup>, written by a well-respected world-class climate scientist, Dr. Steven Koonan. Dr. Koonan was -- among other things -- the Undersecretary of Science in the U.S. Department of Energy during the Obama Administration. He has also chaired international climate-related scientific projects.

In his book, Dr. Koonan lays bare the statistical abuses and misrepresentations committed by even the world's most renowned scientific institutions.

Dr. Koonan does not claim that we humans do not impact the environment. We certainly do. But he makes clear that the scientific community has abandoned its effort to objectively inform, and instead uses selected – and often false data to persuade – to support specific favored industries and a specific social agenda.

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Unsettled, Steven Koonin. BenBella Books. 2021

I have long said that there are three climate movements:

There is the *science* of climate that presents facts and findings, engages in fact-based research and debate, and that acknowledges the limitations inherent in trying to incorporate the millions of variables involved with measuring climate.

Second, there is the *politics* of climate that presents, manipulates and – if necessary – invents facts to promote a political agenda; and third...

There is the *religion* of climate that regards those who manipulate and misrepresent the data as high priests, and that regards challenges to them as pure heresy.

For example, did you know that a few years ago Chuck Schumer and a few other Democrats tried to make it unlawful to use government funded studies to refute prevailing climate assumptions? Seriously! Fortunately, their proposed legislation went nowhere, but how awful – and frightening – that they would seriously attempt to make scientific debate unlawful!

Again, I encourage you to read Dr. Koonan's book, *Unsettled*.

So, let us have an objective debate. Let us find ways to leave this planet a better and safer place.

But let us also demand that science serves the truth, and not someone's political agenda.

**And the Winner is – Democratic Capitalism!**

I hope we have demonstrated what you already knew – that the United States is the most productive nation on earth precisely because we embrace – and must protect – Democratic Capitalism!

Yes, the winner is...Democratic Capitalism!

Elements of Democratic Capitalism may be corrupted from time to time. It may shift too far toward corporate greed or toward mob rule, or (as now, perhaps) toward both extremes simultaneously, driven by big-tech-controlled social media.

But the genius of our system is that – with the active involvement of the American people – we have met past challenges – and we shall rise to meet current and future challenges as well. We shall do so because we have both the determination and the resources.

Freedom is not an ideology. It is the natural condition of humankind.

Democracy is the wind upon which freedom flies.

Capitalism is the nourishment upon which freedom feeds.

Together, with our help, they will take us, our children, and all future American generations to heights well beyond our dreams.

*For more from Keith DeGreen, visit [www.degreen.com](http://www.degreen.com)*